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United Nations

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Part II
Strategic Review pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 58/153

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Supplement No. 12

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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I. Introduction

1. The Office of the High Commissioner of Refugees was established 62 years ago, with a mandate from the General Assembly to provide international protection to refugees and find solutions to their plight.[1] The Office was given a three-year term and a budget of USD 300,000.

2. A half-century later, a review was undertaken, in the context of the continuation of the Office, to ensure that UNHCR would be appropriately equipped "to carry out [its] mandate and to respond to the challenges of modernity."[2] Based on that review and the recommendations it contained, in 2003 the General Assembly moved beyond its repeated short-term extensions of the Office and provided for its tenure "until the refugee problem is solved."[3] In so doing, it affirmed the Office's mandate as dedicated to "international protection and the search for durable solutions for refugees and … other persons of concern to the Office."[4]

3. Since that time, the High Commissioner has reported directly to the General Assembly, through an annual report on the activities of the Office. Yet the General Assembly also anticipated the value of periodic reviews to assess global trends and the Office's capacity to meet the needs of those it serves. Thus, in extending the mandate of the Office, it specified that "every ten years … the [High Commissioner's] report will include a strategic review of the global situation of refugees and the role of the Office."[5]

4. This is the first such decennial review.[6] It builds upon the themes analyzed ten years ago, identifying key challenges of the intervening decade and how the Office has responded. Progress has been achieved on institutional reform and on strengthening protection and emergency response capacities of the Office, yet substantial challenges remain in realizing the protection and solutions envisioned by the international community. The reality of forced displacement is more complex and more widespread than ever. Old crises go unresolved, while new ones emerge, adding ever more to the numbers of forcibly displaced. The review therefore concludes by considering the collective efforts that will be required in the years to come if the international community, with the support of UNHCR, is to strengthen protection outcomes and deliver solutions for those in need.

II. The role and functions of the Office

5. In a world in which armed conflict, violence, discrimination, and deficits in good governance and the rule of law persist, UNHCR's role and functions remain as relevant as ever. Their legal basis – found, *inter alia*, in the Statute of the Office, various resolutions of the General Assembly, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (1951 Refugee Convention), subsequent international refugee instruments, and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1961 Convention) – gives the Office a unique identity, specific legal authority and responsibility.

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[1] General Assembly Resolution 319(IV); General Assembly Resolution 428(V).

[2] *Strengthening the capacity of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to carry out its mandate*, A/58/410, paragraph 2. See also General Assembly Resolution 57/186 (requesting the report and proposals of the High Commissioner).

[3] General Assembly Resolution 58/153, paragraph 9.

[4] Ibid., paragraph 2.

[5] General Assembly Resolution 58/153, paragraph10.

[6] This review has been prepared in consultation with the Secretary-General and the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. Ibid.

6. The international protection of refugees – including the search for solutions – is the *raison d'être* of UNHCR and thus is often referred to as its "core mandate."[7] Creating the Office as a subsidiary body, the General Assembly recognized that the problem of refugees is global in scope and nature. It also confirmed that the protection of refugees – who cannot receive the protection of their country of origin or habitual residence – is inherently international in character, dependent on the collective solidarity and cooperation of nations, indeed a "responsibility of the United Nations."[8] Thus, while States bear the primary responsibility of protecting refugees on their territory, UNHCR was established as the international entity to ensure that protection on behalf of the United Nations. Promoting accession and supervising the Convention's application were enumerated as responsibilities in the Office's Statute and the Convention itself.[9] Similar provisions exist in regional refugee instruments.

7. The General Assembly provided scope for further responsibilities to be entrusted to the Office, as it might determine.[10] Through successive resolutions, the General Assembly has given content to this provision, recognizing additional categories of persons of concern (including refugees who have returned to their country of origin (returnees), stateless persons and, in certain circumstances, internally displaced persons (IDPs)); acknowledging the reach of the mandate to countries of origin and return; and embracing a wider array of activities, such as the provision of humanitarian assistance and support for reintegration, as relevant and necessary to fulfill the mandate of international protection and solutions.

8. UNHCR's mandate on statelessness was consolidated upon the entry into force of the 1961 Convention in 1975, as the General Assembly conferred upon the Office certain functions envisioned in the Convention's supervisory provisions.[11] Subsequently, the General Assembly, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, recognized an enhanced scope of activity for UNHCR, including promoting accessions to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954 Convention) and the 1961 Convention, providing technical and advisory services to States on the preparation of nationality legislation, identifying and protecting stateless persons, and preventing and reducing statelessness.[12]

9. UNHCR's engagement with IDPs is situated within a different framework than that of its work with refugees and stateless persons. Most significantly, the affected State always retains primary responsibility for IDPs, who generally are citizens of the State in which they continue to reside and who do not have a distinct status under international law such as refugees. UNHCR's engagement is not rooted in a global convention such as the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1961 Convention.[13] Unlike those sources, which provide a specific and unique mandate to UNHCR, the Office's work with IDPs is based on

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[7] See General Assembly Resolution 428(V), Annex, paragraph 1 (providing that UNHCR, "acting under the authority of the General Assembly, shall assume the function of providing international protection … and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting governments ….").

[8] General Assembly Resolution 319(IV) second preambular paragraph.

[9] General Assembly Resolution 428(V), Annex, paragraph 8(a); 1951 Convention, article 35.

[10] General Assembly Resolution 428(V) Annex, paragraph 9 (UNHCR "shall engage in such additional activities … as the General Assembly may determine.") See also General Assembly Resolution 319(IV), paragraph 1.

[11] General Assembly Resolution 3274(XXIX); General Assembly Resolution 31/36.

[12] General Assembly Resolution 50/152. See also, e.g., General Assembly Resolution 61/137.

[13] At the regional level, the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (Kampala Convention) notes UNHCR's protection expertise and the invitation of the Executive Council of the African Union "to continue and reinforce its role in the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons." Kampala Convention, preamble.

paragraph 9 of the Statute, in conjunction with resolutions of the General Assembly dating from 1972, which acknowledge UNHCR's work on behalf of internally displaced populations. Operationally, the Office's work occurs within the framework elaborated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which considers the operational strengths and complementarities of each actor, as well as the national context and consent of the government, in seeking to deliver an effective and predictable international response. The General Assembly has recognized certain parameters for UNHCR's involvement with IDPs,[14] and has further authorized the Office to participate "at the invitation of the Secretary-General, in those humanitarian endeavours of the United Nations for which the Office has particular expertise and experience."[15]

10. Beyond specifying the populations of concern and functions entrusted to UNHCR, the General Assembly, in its enabling resolutions, established an institutional structure for UNHCR such as is necessary to fulfill its mandated functions. It left no question that the work of the Office "shall be of an entirely non-political character; it shall be humanitarian and social."[16] Accordingly, it required that the Office "be so organized within the framework of the United Nations as to possess the degree of independence and prestige required for the effective performance of the High Commissioner's duties."[17] The High Commissioner is elected by the General Assembly, acts under its authority, and reports to it, while closely liaising with the Secretary-General and other parts of the UN system.

11. Three important aspects of UNHCR's role and functions warrant highlighting:

First, the Statute and relevant international instruments make clear that UNHCR's functions are independent and yet are to be assumed in partnership, dialogue and cooperation with States, in a role that is both supportive and supervisory, to ensure the collective aim of international protection and solutions.

12. Second, UNHCR's role is of an enduring nature, continuing beyond humanitarian crisis. This role attaches from the moment an individual meets the criteria of being a refugee or a stateless person and continues until a solution is found. It is about reclaiming lives and human dignity; it is not curtailed by a lack of funds, the end of an acute crisis, or the invisibility of a protracted situation.

13. Third, UNHCR's role – ensuring protection for those who are among the world's most vulnerable – dictates its operational character. UNHCR must be present alongside those it serves. This brings untold strength and opportunities to the organization, as well as challenges.

III. The Situation of Refugees: A Decade of Change and Continuity

A. The global context and trends in forced displacement[18]

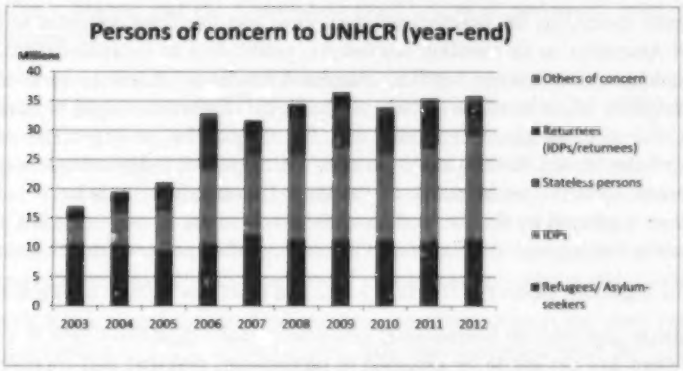
14. Over 45 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced from their homes by conflict and persecution. An unprecedented number of refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, stateless and internally displaced persons – 35.8 million – receive protection and assistance

[14] General Assembly Resolution 48/116, paragraph 12.
[15] General Assembly Resolution 2956 (XXVII), paragraph 2.
[16] General Assembly Resolution 428(V), Annex, paragraph 2.
[17] General Assembly Resolution 319(IV), Annex, paragraph 1(a).
[18] For a detailed analysis of developments relating to forced displacement and statelessness from 2006 to 2012, see *The State of the World's Refugees: In Search of Solidarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press (2012)), produced in cooperation with UNHCR (available from www.unhcr.org.refworld).

from the Office. Far from declining, the number of persons of concern to UNHCR has doubled in ten years. Moreover, the rate at which new refugees are crossing international borders is the highest in a decade.

15. The last decade has witnessed advances and setbacks, the resolution of some protracted situations, and the entrenchment of others. For this reason, no snapshot in time can accurately portray the situation across the last ten years. Yet it is certain that the last decade concluded in a markedly different situation than it began. Several figures interspersed through the text provide a glimpse of the magnitude of change.

Figure 1



16. As the decade began, the world had been experiencing an extended period of refugee returns. The Office's report to the General Assembly noted that in the preceding 30 months, nearly five million people had found solutions through voluntary repatriation, resettlement or local integration. In subsequent years, conflict-induced displacement was often internal, including in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda. Increasing attention to these crises set the stage for a major revision of the international community's humanitarian response to internal displacement.

17. In recent years, however, the proliferation of major new crises has been regional in nature, generating millions of refugees as well as internally displaced, and extending from the Middle East to North Africa, across East and Central Africa and into the Sahel. At the same time, the stagnation of some long-term crises resulted in a slowdown in voluntary repatriation. The unpredictability and volatility of the context for UNHCR's work is illustrated by a simple fact: in 2012 alone, UNHCR was forced to issue seven supplemental emergency appeals to mount emergency responses and to meet the needs of continuing crises that deteriorated.

18. More notable than the scale of today's crises is the convergence of multiple new conflicts with the intransigence of the old. During the first half of 2013, nearly 200,000 refugees left the Syrian Arab Republic each month. And yet more than sixty per cent of refugees under UNHCR's care remain in protracted situations, displaced for more than five years across 25 hosting countries. The entrenchment of old crises – typified by the situations in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia – is leading to a quasi-permanent refugee status for far too many.

19. With the level of global forced displacement at an 18-year high, it is evident that its causes have become more complex. The traditional drivers of displacement – armed conflict and violations of human rights – are increasingly intertwined with other factors, including population growth, urbanization, criminal violence, food insecurity and scarcity of natural resources. The consequences of climate change – particularly flooding and desertification – and other natural disasters, in turn, affect and are affected by these trends. Incomplete democratization has resulted in social and political exclusion, and high youth

unemployment stirs further unrest. Growing uncertainty linked to the global economic situation has prompted segments within some societies to expressions of racism and xenophobia, and to retreat from the principles of solidarity and human rights underlying the 1951 Refugee Convention. As these trends converge, they often prompt movement of a mixed character, posing challenges for national authorities who must nonetheless ensure that protection-sensitive approaches to migration management and security serve those in need of international protection.

20. Providing refuge to those in need is the most tangible manifestation of international protection. The burden of sustaining the displaced continues to fall increasingly and overwhelmingly on the developing world, where more than four-fifths of all refugees reside. Even without the effects of the global economic downturn, the capacity of host governments and host communities has been under inordinate strain. More than half of the refugees under UNHCR's care are hosted in countries with gross domestic product below USD 5,000 per capita. For countries like the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya and Pakistan, who are witnessing the birth of third-generation refugees, their generosity is not quantifiable in economic terms alone, but goes to the heart of humanitarianism and solidarity with those in need.

Figure 2

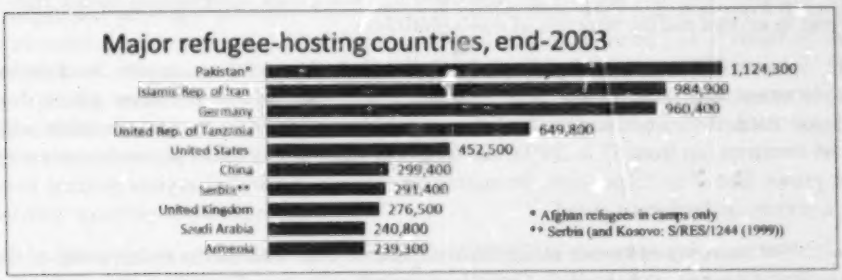
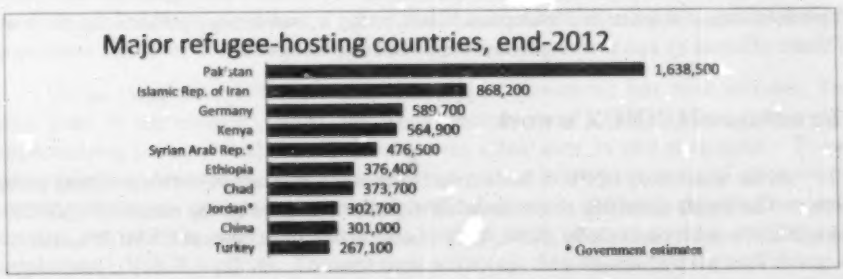


Figure 3



21. It is a testament to solidarity and cultural tradition that, in recent years, countries across the Middle East and Africa have continued to receive and welcome hundreds of thousands of people fleeing violence and persecution.

B. Enhancing solidarity in prevention and response

22. Against this stark backdrop of numbers, the decade has witnessed important normative advances and increased cooperation to protect and find solutions for the forcibly displaced. A Ministerial Communiqué adopted by 155 governments in 2011, marking the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention, reaffirmed its relevance as "the foundation of the international refugee protection regime." The first internationally binding instrument on the rights of the internally displaced – the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa – came into force. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation convened the first Ministerial Conference on Refugees in the Islamic

World· the resulting Ashbagat Declaration notes the enduring value of the 1951 Refugee Convention in the twenty-first century. Considerable progress on accessions to the 1954 and 1961· Statelessness Conventions is discussed below. Important steps to address impunity include the charging of forced displacement as a crime against humanity by the International Criminal Court and *ad hoc* international tribunals.

23. The expansion of State-led regional cooperation for protection and solutions has been another positive feature of this decade. That the great majority of refugees stay within their immediate regions provides strong impetus for responsibility-sharing: collaborative regional arrangements for refugee protection can stabilize refugee groups and flows, minimize irregular secondary movement, and lay foundations for solutions. In Asia, the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime has led to a regional cooperation framework that enhances capacity-building, sharing of good practices and pooling of technical resources through a regional support office. European Union asylum legislation has been amended in a number of areas and progress on cooperation has been made during the first two years of the European Asylum Support Office, although continued disparities in recognition rates among EU member States underscore the need for strengthened harmonization. In Central Asia, the Almaty Process on Mixed Migration and International Protection aims to strengthen regional cooperation so that migration and state security are addressed in a framework safeguarding human rights, access to asylum and the principle of *non-refoulement*.

24. At the national level, legislation has been adopted to compensate victims of forced displacement and restore their land. Adequate progress has not yet been achieved in refugee status determination (RSD) at the national level: UNHCR conducts mandate RSD in 66 countries (up from 57 in 2003), and its global share of individual status determination has grown from 7 to 13 per cent. Strengthening capacity in national asylum systems must be a priority in the decade ahead.

25. The enduring relevance of UNHCR's mandate is evident in the membership of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. The Committee welcomed 23 additional members in this decade, reaching 87. From its origins in 1959 with 25 predominantly western and European States, today's membership reflects the diversity of States affected by and working to resolve forced displacement.

C. The nature of UNHCR's work

26. As an institution, UNHCR has needed to continuously adapt to this evolving global context. The trends identified above have had significant impact on the nature of UNHCR's engagement – most particularly where, with whom, and in what context UNHCR works.

First: working in urban and non-camp environments

27. The world has passed a tipping point in the last decade, with more than half of its population now living in cities. More than half of the world's refugees, too, are urban dwellers, while roughly one-third remain in camps, predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. The populations of the world's largest camps, in Jordan and Kenya, surpass those of major cities.

28. While identifying and reaching refugees in urban areas poses a new set of challenges, life outside camps also affords advantages. Refugees living in communities can reclaim a greater sense of normalcy and dignity, compared with the artificiality of camp life. At the same time, refugees in urban environments may be exposed to greater risk of exploitation. Effectively serving refugees in urban areas therefore requires new partnerships and new means of enabling protection and providing assistance. UNHCR's *Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas*, launched in 2009, seeks to address this

reality and seize the opportunities it presents. Refugees' presence in urban areas permits their inclusion in national systems, for example, eliminating the need for costly parallel structures, as often exist in camps. Promoting refugees' access to local services has expanded partnership opportunities with a wide range of actors, including line ministries, municipal authorities, civil society and refugees themselves. Within refugee communities, community volunteers are often most effective in identifying vulnerable refugees and providing information about services.

29. Working with refugees in urban areas opens avenues for strategies on livelihoods and self-sufficiency, including interventions related to micro-finance, entrepreneurship and job-creation. It permits varied means of providing assistance, such as cash-based interventions, that enhance flexibility, support local markets and respect refugees' choice and dignity. As UNHCR implements the urban policy, it is shifting from a mindset of receiving and responding to refugees to one of active outreach. In doing so, the Office is drawing on the support of governments to promote linkages and activities with local entities.

30. Focusing humanitarian response solely on refugees or on the internally displaced, in isolation from broader local communities, can be inefficient and problematic, especially when significant humanitarian needs exist within the host community. UNHCR has strengthened skills and strategies for working in cooperation with and in support of local communities, recognizing that they, too, are "displacement-affected" as a result of the presence of refugee or IDP populations. UNHCR fosters acceptance and tolerance, for example, by reinforcing and providing support to existing community structures, such as schools and clinics, or community centers offering vocational training and other services to the entire community.

Second: working in partnership

31. The imperative of public and private partnerships for the achievement of protection and solutions is embedded in the Statute of the Office. A testament to the centrality of partnership is the fact that over 38 per cent of UNHCR's operational expenditure in 2012 was channeled through partners – a figure that has doubled in just six years and reflects cooperation with over 900 non-governmental organizations.

32. At the same time, UNHCR's understanding of partnership has been enriched. For many years in the refugee context, the word "partner" was taken as synonymous with "implementing partner," and the relationship was often seen as one-directional. Today partnership is understood as mutually supportive and embracing an array of dimensions, including strategic, operational, financial and advocacy. Partners provide not only expertise and affiliate staff for operations; through their own work, they amplify and complement UNHCR's efforts. Through their advocacy, they ensure that the well-being of persons of concern remains at the fore of public and political awareness. Partnership is undertaken with an increasing diversity of actors: municipal as well as national authorities; local, national, and international NGOs; UN agencies and inter-governmental organizations; civil society; faith-based organizations; universities and policy institutes; and most importantly, refugees, stateless persons and IDPs themselves.

33. United Nations reforms have also enhanced the practice of partnership, through their emphasis on increased predictability, accountability and system-wide coherence. UNHCR has sought to employ the partnerships fostered through Delivering as One and the IASC's Humanitarian Reform and Transformative Agenda to strengthen protection and solutions outcomes. Yet UN reform has also presented challenges for UNHCR in its operations, including preservation of humanitarian space, discussed below. UNHCR is working to import the spirit of partnership and lessons-learned from the humanitarian reform into the context of refugee emergencies. It has invested substantially in learning programmes for staff to develop their coordination and strategic leadership skills, and in the establishment

of dedicated cluster coordinator and information management positions. A current imperative is ensuring an effective interface between UNHCR's refugee leadership and coordination and coordination mechanisms in a broader humanitarian response. Examples exist in the Office's leadership of regional refugee responses in relation to Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic, and previously Iraq.

Third: working in increasingly insecure and unpredictable operating environments

34. UNHCR's strength lies in its staff. These are committed individuals who often spend their entire career with UNHCR, serving in emergencies, conflict zones and remote locations. Today over 7,000 national and international staff serve in 125 countries. Fully 30 per cent of international staff, who are subject to mandatory rotation, serve at any given time in hardship, non-family duty stations.

35. This decade has been marked by an increase in security risk and a constriction of humanitarian space. As the nature of conflict has changed in some instances, so have the sources of violence and risk to staff and persons of concern. These include actors who do not recognize any limitation on their conduct in relation to civilians and humanitarians and who operate outside of a chain of command. Certainly there has been an escalation of threats to United Nations staff and humanitarian workers. Aside from casualties due to indiscriminate violence, the UN has been targeted, especially where it is perceived as being associated with a particular political agenda. Most recently, this includes attacks in Mogadishu (2013), Abuja, Kandahar and Mazar-i-Sharif (2011), Kabul and Islamabad (2009), Hargeisa (2008) and Algiers (2007). UNHCR has not been immune: the Office lost 16 colleagues during this 10-year period.

36. Given this reality, the UN system must remain flexible in the context-specific application of its policy on integration. Strategic convergence, respecting the distinct mandates within the UN system, should be the goal. In a number of countries where a United Nations peacekeeping or political mission is also present, UNHCR has benefitted from a strategic partnership between the UN mission and country team that supports coherence and, ultimately, serves protection outcomes. But in high-risk environments, where there is no peace to keep and UN forces may be perceived as aligned with one party, greater caution is called for in establishing structural and other forms of visible integration. In all instances, but particularly in these, UNHCR must clearly maintain and communicate its steadfast fidelity to the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence.

37. Following a 2009 review of UNHCR's ability to protect staff and persons of concern, the Office enhanced security management across its operations. The number of field safety professionals has doubled in the past decade. Finding ways to stay, rather than defining when to leave, requires continuous investment in state of the art risk mitigation measures, paired with cultivation of a culture of security, in which all staff assume responsibility for safety and are appropriately trained. Given the nature of UNHCR's mandate, leaving can have dire consequences for those the Office serves. Today UNHCR's culture of security is grounded in sound risk management, enabling the Office to be present where programme criticality requires, even where some risk inherently remains.

IV. Institutional reform for more effective delivery

38. Responding to the needs of a growing population of concern, as well as changes in the context and nature of UNHCR's work, it became apparent that structural and management change would be indispensable for UNHCR to become a more effective organization. Instituting a review of headquarters and field structures, the High Commissioner noted that headquarters staff and administrative costs had been on an

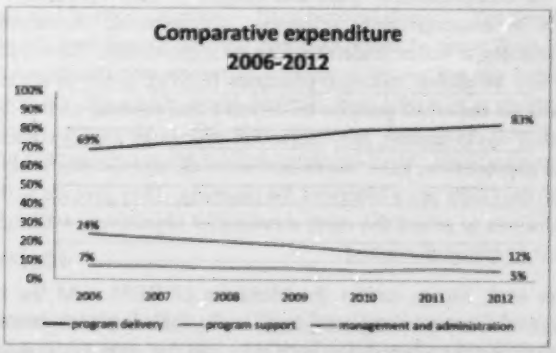
unsustainable upward trend, reaching a high in 2006, when global staff costs represented approximately 41 per cent of total expenditure, including 13.7 per cent for headquarters alone.

39. The core of UNHCR's institutional reform measures took place from 2006-2009, although consolidation continues, with attention today on systems of oversight. The principle driving reform has been to maximize delivery of protection and solutions for persons of concern by ensuring that programmes and activities are of the highest quality; that resources are efficiently employed; and that delivery is as effective as possible. In practical terms, this has been accomplished through structural reform and the adoption of a system of results-based management.

A. Structural reform

40. UNHCR has emerged stronger and leaner, enabling the greatest proportion of every contribution received to go directly toward the benefit of persons of concern. Staff costs, as a proportion of overall expenditure, have fallen from 41 per cent in 2006 to 26 per cent at the beginning of 2013. Headquarters staff in Geneva have been reduced from over 1,000 in 2006 to less than 700 in 2012, such that headquarters expense as a proportion of global expenditure declined to just 8 per cent. This reduction in headquarters to field-based expenditure has been achieved even as UNHCR's global activity grew from USD 1.14 billion in 2005 to USD 2.36 billion in 2012. Increased efficiency has enabled the Office to channel savings directly to underfunded and neglected situations and to address critical needs such as malnutrition, malaria, water and sanitation, and sexual and gender-based violence.

Figure 4



41. These economies were achieved largely through a rationalization of posts, including review of what functions were essential to be located in headquarters, and what could be more efficiently out-posted or regionalized. The creation of a Global Service Centre allowed for the centralization of administrative and support functions in Budapest, Hungary, with enhanced support provided at a reduced cost. Regional structures were strengthened to undertake situational and solutions planning and management at a sub-regional level, and the adoption of a resource allocation framework increased the authority of field-based managers, providing them with additional flexibility to respond to operational realities. Certain technical and protection support functions were also integrated into regional offices to better enable strategic support to field operations.

Figure 5

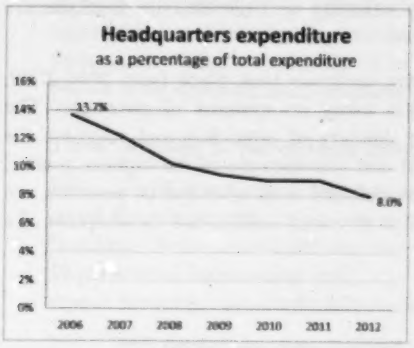
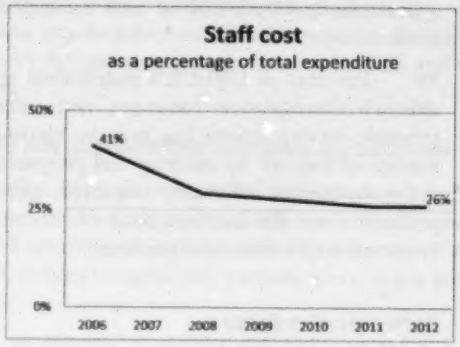


Figure 6



B. Results-based management, budgets and funding

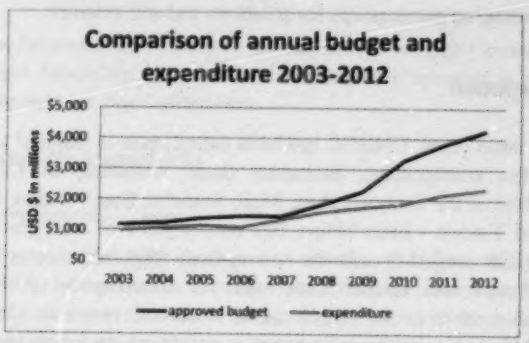
42. Results-based management (RBM) emphasizes the achievement of results as the essential task of management. In practice, UNHCR has used RBM to strengthen the way it sets priorities, identifies and maps needs, analyzes data, designs programmes, establishes budgets, and monitors impact for those it serves.

43. Several inter-related initiatives have fundamentally changed the way UNHCR plans and delivers programming for persons of concern. First, a focus on accountability to those it serves led UNHCR to move from a budget based on anticipated revenues (estimated donor contributions) to one which identifies and measures the needs of those it is mandated to protect. This comprehensive needs assessment (CNA), first implemented in 2010, serves as the basis for the comprehensive plan and budget of each operation. A "four pillar" budget structure – encompassing refugees, statelessness, reintegration, and IDP programmes – enables a better understanding of expenditure. Each operation's plan is informed by the use of global strategic priorities (GSPs), a set of operational priorities covering objectives on behalf of persons of concern and relating to five broad categories: favorable protection environment; fair protection processes and documentation; security from violence and exploitation; basic needs and services; and durable solutions. Established at the global level, the GSPs are a blueprint for planning. They provide sufficient flexibility to individual operations to select the most meaningful objectives, with measurable impact indicators, for their operational context.

44. A software tool, Focus, unites the elements of RBM. At the country level, it supports the design of country operations plans, tracks their implementation, and feeds into a global information system. Embedding the GSPs and the underlying results framework – a standardized and comprehensive description of the results UNHCR seeks to achieve – in Focus has enabled direct links between UNHCR's planning framework, the budgeting of costs, and the recording of results. Aggregated at the global level, data on results over time will eventually provide UNHCR and its partners with better information about shortcomings in the achievement of protection and solutions, as well as warnings about normative or administrative gaps in protection systems.

45. Implementation of RBM has not been without challenges and is in a process of refinement. Strengthening the institutional culture of results and accountability takes time. Ultimately, RBM has introduced more rigorous results-orientation to UNHCR's planning and implementation. This is all the more important as it has occurred simultaneously with a doubling of UNHCR's global programme implementation, as demonstrated by expenditure, and at a time of even greater, unmet needs.

Figure 7



46. The needs-based budget has proved a useful tool to acknowledge the needs of refugees and others of concern. In conjunction with the GSPs and the results framework, it enables the Office to demonstrate the consequences of a short-fall in funding. It has also been an impetus, and a means, for broadening the reach of UNHCR's donor base. A significant expansion of the private sector fundraising service since 2010 has facilitated outreach to individuals and corporations. The service has more than doubled return on investment, a figure that is expected to grow. Equally important, UNHCR's message is reaching a broader audience, with nearly 628,000 individual donors in 2012, the highest level ever.

47. UNHCR's budget is overwhelmingly met through voluntary contributions. The Statute of the Office limits regular UN funding to administrative costs: in 2012 this amounted to 2 per cent of funds received. In the face of recent crises, many traditional donors have generously increased their support, and additional States – including developing nations and hosting countries – have become donors. Yet despite these positive trends and an overall doubling of funding received annually since 2006, the scope recent crises has far surpassed available resources, leaving an increasing gap between the depth of need (as evidenced by the needs-based budget) and UNHCR's ability to respond (as evidenced by funds received). By this measure, last year nearly half of needs acknowledged and planned for in the budget approved by UNHCR's Executive Committee were left unmet.

C. Internal Oversight

48. With the increase in its budget, the Office has placed renewed emphasis on oversight functions, including inspection, investigation, evaluation and audit. With the consent of the Executive Committee, the High Commissioner appointed an Independent Audit and Oversight Committee in 2012 to review these functions and their structure within the Office, and to advise how they may be strengthened. The Office has begun planning to bring "in-house" the internal audit function, which has been performed by the Office for Internal Oversight Services. Ensuring holistic implementation and response to policy evaluations is another priority under review.

V. Strengthening operational response

49. The process of structural and management change outlined above served a single end: to ensure that UNHCR is organized for the most efficient and effective delivery of protection and solutions to persons of concern. With management reform taking hold, in 2010 UNHCR committed itself to strengthening its delivery of those mandated responsibilities, setting two core operational priorities: emergency response and protection

capacity. The elusiveness of solutions in some contexts has necessitated a third: renewed commitment to leveraging partnerships for solutions and self-reliance.

A. Emergency response

50. In the past three years, UNHCR has been called upon to respond to multiple new or intensified complex emergencies, including those unfolding in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Even before this convergence of emergencies began, it was apparent that UNHCR needed to enhance its corporate response to emergencies, activating the entire range of capacities, resources and expertise at its disposal. The Office embarked on a comprehensive review, in search of a structural response that is predictable, immediate, scalable and reliable. Emergency personnel and policies were addressed alongside security and material assistance, so that each element of an effective emergency response would be managed in a complementary manner. What began as a continuation of structural reform with attention to preparedness has, indeed, been instrumental in enabling UNHCR to effectively deliver protection and assistance to those affected by the emergencies of the last three years.

51. UNHCR's long-standing approach to emergency staffing had been characterized by a team of dedicated emergency officers; a modest internal roster; and significant reliance on standby partners. The "Corporate Approach," introduced in 2011, permits an emergency operation to access all of UNHCR's human resources and expertise and is predicated on an expansion of the roster system. A senior corporate emergency roster (P-5 to D-2) provides seasoned managers ready to assume emergency leadership. Technical networks are maintained with internal and external experts to meet gaps in shelter, supply, information management, cluster coordination and critical areas of protection, such as child protection and sexual and gender-based violence. External experts are available through standby agreements with 17 international partners; their rosters, which last year offered 300 experts for deployment, supplement UNHCR's long-standing Emergency Response Team, which maintains 100 staff for deployment upon 72 hours' notice. Strategic use of standby partners remains an essential and invaluable part of UNHCR's emergency operations.

52. The foundation of the new emergency response is a framework of designated authorities and responsibilities for emergency activation/deactivation and a procedure for internal coordination. Policies define various levels of emergency, each of which triggers access to emergency staffing, headquarters support, and material and financial resources. This clarity adds predictability, resulting in a quicker and more efficient delivery on the ground.

53. Headquarters support offers guidance on the evolving inter-agency and operational context, including partnership in refugee emergencies, where UNHCR's leadership and coordination often interface with other interagency coordination structures in a broader humanitarian crisis. Guidance on emergency staffing levels and development of emergency appeals has strengthened UNHCR's institutional approach. Guidance on critical elements of protection in emergencies will further ensure that a strong protection approach is embedded in the response from the outset.

54. For essential relief in emergency response, the Office has established a target capacity to provide non-food items, including tents and bedding, for 600,000 people within 72 hours. To position the supplies closer to affected populations, a global stockpile management system includes stockpiles and regional hubs in West, Central and East Africa, Europe and the Middle East. This has increased flexibility while reducing transport time and cost. The rapid succession of unfolding emergencies across Africa and the Middle East in recent years confirmed the soundness of this approach.

B. Protection

55. The *Note on International Protection* accompanies the High Commissioner's annual report to the General Assembly. Several fundamental developments in protection, which have spanned the decade, are highlighted here.

1. Strengthening normative frameworks

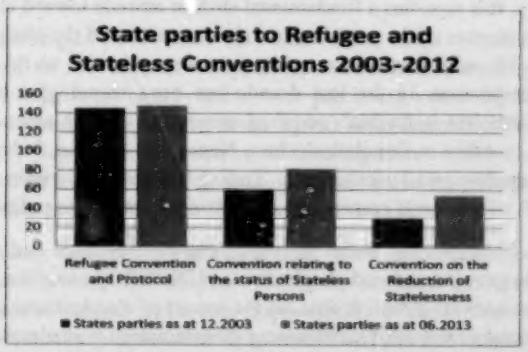
Ministerial Intergovernmental Event

56. The occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness provided the opportunity to draw global attention to the continuing problems of forced displacement and statelessness and to prompt renewed commitment to their resolution. In December 2011, UNHCR convened an intergovernmental event at the ministerial level to commemorate the anniversaries. Some 155 Governments and 60 organizations participated.

57. The principles underlying the international refugee protection regime – tolerance, solidarity and respect for human rights and human dignity – were resoundingly reaffirmed, not least by a joint Ministerial Communiqué, but also by numerous accessions and pledges to accede to one or both of the Statelessness Conventions. Yet States recognized that enjoyment of the rights set forth in the Conventions depends upon adequate domestic implementation and the adoption of quality asylum systems. In all, 106 States made pledges on an array of measures to strengthen their national policies and legislation on the protection of refugees, stateless persons and internally displaced persons, and on the achievement of durable solutions.[19] States also used the Communiqué to acknowledge the generosity of host countries and renew their commitment to international cooperation through solidarity and responsibility and burden sharing. A group pledge by the Governments of Germany, Mexico, Norway and Switzerland to obtain a better understanding of the protection needs of those displaced cross-border due to natural disasters, including as a result of climate change, has taken form as the Nansen Initiative; it continues today in cooperation with interested States at regional and sub-regional levels.

58. Today UNHCR offices around the world are supporting member States in the implementation of their pledges. Progress on implementation was a key feature in the statements of many States at the 63rd session of the Executive Committee in 2012; it is hoped that annual updates by States will continue to feature going forward.

Figure 8



[19] See *Pledges 2011: Ministerial Intergovernmental Event on Refugees and Stateless Persons* (available from www.unhcr.org).

Dialogues on Protection Challenges

59. While the commemorations primarily engaged States, another annual platform has been established to activate a broad array of partners – both traditional and as-yet untapped – to examine contemporary gaps in protection. The High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges was initiated in 2007 as a response to the increasingly entrenched and complex situations of forced displacement confronting the Office. Their intent has been to creatively and collectively approach some of the greatest challenges, including protracted displacement, displacement in urban areas, and protection and solutions in the context of mixed migration.

60. The Dialogues have emerged as a forum for unfettered debate and innovation precisely because they unite stakeholders who have a clear interest in the issues and commitment to humanitarian principles, and yet who have not been traditional interlocutors on these matters, such as mayors, local officials, faith-based communities and academics.

61. States and other stakeholders have welcomed the Dialogues as an informal way to prepare the ground for eventual targeted action or new partnership. Although not structured to elicit formal outcomes, the Dialogues have resulted in fresh thinking and spawned important initiatives, such as new approaches toward protracted displacement and meeting the protection needs of refugees in urban settings. The 2012 Dialogue on Faith and Protection prompted collaboration by 25 faith-based NGOs and the adoption of a declaratory *Affirmation of Welcome*, drawing from the traditions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, to guide faith leaders in providing welcoming environments for refugees and displaced people, including promoting tolerance and combatting xenophobia.

2. Expanding operational engagement on statelessness

62. The Office has substantially enhanced its work on statelessness during the past decade. With 61 operations pursuing objectives on statelessness in 2013, global expenditure on activities related to statelessness has nearly trebled in three years.

63. This jump is not coincidental: UNHCR pursued a concerted campaign of raising awareness and promoting accessions to the 1961 and 1954 Conventions preceding the commemorations. In total, 61 States made 105 pledges to address statelessness through acceding to one or both of the Conventions, reforming nationality legislation, mapping stateless populations, establishing formal statelessness determination procedures, or improving civil documentation.

64. Collectively, this signifies a fundamental shift in attitude toward statelessness and is one of the major successes of the past decade. Implementation of the pledges is now crucial for the estimated 10 million stateless persons remaining in the world today. Progress toward ending statelessness in the last decade has been meaningful but limited: some 4million formerly stateless individuals acquired nationality through amendments to laws or changes in policy, notably in Bangladesh, Iraq, Nepal, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkmenistan. Ending statelessness within the next decade is firmly within reach of the world community, if met with appropriate political will.

65. The Office is supporting States to implement their pledges and, more broadly, to pursue measures to prevent and end statelessness. UNHCR has worked with 64 countries on surveys and censuses to establish data on the extent of statelessness on their territories and is supporting establishment of statelessness determination procedures, an essential first step. The Office is further supporting analysis of the compatibility of national laws with the conventions and has facilitated bi-lateral visits between countries seeking to revise their domestic legislation and countries that have recently done so. Beyond support to member States, UNHCR is building a global network of strategic partnerships on statelessness: the

First Global Forum on Statelessness will be convened in 2014, uniting governments, NGOs, academic and international organizations and stateless persons in their efforts to resolve statelessness.

3. Accountability to the individual

66. The process of institutional reform discussed above has been one of enhancing accountability: UNHCR's accountability to the international community, for the mandate it has been given; to donors, for the efficient and effective use of funds entrusted; and, ultimately, to persons of concern, for the protection to which they are entitled. Operationally as well as institutionally, UNHCR has embraced its fundamental accountability to those it serves: what began in 2004 as an effort to mainstream age and gender awareness into the Office's operations has today evolved into an age, gender and diversity approach (AGD) that fundamentally defines and informs the way UNHCR involves persons of concern in the design of its programmes and the delivery of protection, assistance and solutions.

67. The goal of AGD is the equal enjoyment of rights by all persons of concern. At the individual level, this means proper recognition of the unique needs, capacities, constraints and resources of each person. Operationally, this means putting persons of concern at the centre of decisions affecting their lives, as well as those of their families and communities. Participatory assessments, now firmly embedded in UNHCR's planning and programming, are a key means of drawing on the knowledge and skills of affected persons to identify and address protection concerns.

68. UNHCR's experience with AGD has resulted in targeted initiatives to enhance the protection of women, children, persons with disabilities, survivors of SGBV and others with specific needs. Support for field practitioners, through a "*Need to Know*" series on working with individuals whose needs may be over-looked – such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons; older persons; and men and boy survivors of SGBV – has been developed with NGO and inter-agency partners. With the participation of partners, the Office adopted several multi-year strategies – including the *Framework for the Protection of Children*, the *2012-2016 Education Strategy*, and *Action against Sexual and Gender-based Violence: an Updated Strategy* – to re-energize operational engagement through new partnerships, learning programmes, and the creation of regional specialist protection posts.

C. Protracted displacement and solutions

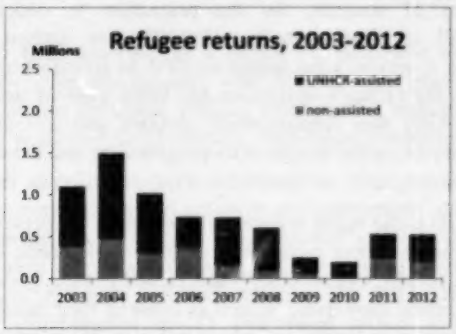
69. At the beginning of 2013, more than half of the refugees under UNHCR's care – 6.4 million of a total of 10.5 million – were living in a protracted situation of displacement. The relative percentage is an improvement over preceding years' figures only due to the massive scale of recent displacement from the Syrian Arab Republic. This fact alone points to the need to fully implement a new way of thinking about solutions – one which sees them not as a distinct event, but rather as situated on a continuum, requiring a solutions orientation to be incorporated from the first humanitarian intervention.

70. Fully enabling refugees to re-claim their lives and determine their futures, in conditions of stability and full respect of rights, remains the ultimate goal of the international protection regime and a core responsibility of the Office, in cooperation with States. UNHCR actively pursues the three traditional durable solutions: voluntary and sustainable repatriation; local integration; and resettlement to a third country. Yet despite progress for distinct groups or populations, meaningful options for durable solutions have eluded the majority of refugees in this decade.

71. Voluntary repatriation remains the solution most often sought by refugees and the one available to the largest percentage of them. During the period under review, a total of

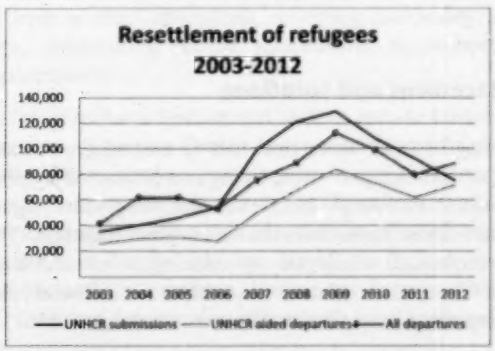
7.2 million refugees were able to return home. Some returns happened on a large scale relatively soon after a conflict or crisis: this was the case with refugees from Kyrgyzstan and Côte d'Ivoire in 2010 - 2011. Others came as a result of breakthroughs or improvements in countries of origin following extended and repeated displacement, as with Afghanistan. However, continued instability in several major countries of origin has meant that far fewer refugees have been able to return home in recent years than during the first half of the decade.

Figure 9



72. Resettlement to a third country is a critical protection tool for the most vulnerable refugees – for example, women and girls at risk – and a strategic tool to demonstrate international solidarity and alleviate a portion of the burden borne by host countries. As a solution, however, it offers permanent safety and enjoyment of fundamental rights to the smallest number of refugees – somewhat less than 1 per cent on average. Over the last decade, there has been progress in expanding both the number of spaces available and the number of countries regularly participating in resettlement programmes (from 16 to 26). The overall number of refugees resettled annually has more than doubled in this decade, reaching 88,600 last year. Yet this taps only a fraction of international capacity for resettlement of those in need, with four out of five resettled refugees going to only two States.

Figure 10



73. For those who can neither return nor be resettled, some form of local integration – intermediate or long-term – remains the primary option. Yet full integration, with naturalization and corresponding rights to employment, education, services, housing and freedom of movement, is a gradual process, and not usually one that host States are able or willing to offer during a mass influx.

74. As the scope of displacement has far outpaced the availability of solutions, the Office has pursued several fundamental shifts in its approach. First, it has recognized that

the traditional, hierarchical approach to durable solutions, which compartmentalizes each from the others, must be replaced by "comprehensive solutions strategies," which promote the three solutions in tandem and in a complementary manner. This approach has been implemented most constructively in the comprehensive solutions strategies for Angolan, Liberian and Rwandan refugees, which have engaged opportunities for return and local integration in conjunction with the cessation of refugee status. UNHCR is also pursuing comprehensive strategies aimed at bringing to a close the situation of Mauritanians in Mali and Senegal, Ghanaians in Togo, Chadians in Niger and Togolese in Benin and Ghana. A comprehensive solutions strategy for refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo has commenced for the nearly half a million refugees living in protracted situations in the Great Lakes and Central Africa region.

75. As they do for protection, regional cooperation and strategies can provide a critical impetus for solutions. The *Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries* is an example of fostering comprehensive solutions through community-based investment in areas of return, in parallel with assistance to host communities, alternative temporary stay arrangements including the right to work, and resettlement. Focusing on housing solutions, the Sarajevo Process has united the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia in a regional plan to end displacement dating from the early 1990s.

76. A second fundamental shift in the Office's approach is rooted in recognition that a single-minded focus on the three durable solutions – to the exclusion of concrete goals that are short of full solutions but nonetheless supportive of them – can result in protracted aid dependency. Where opportunities for durable solutions have not arisen quickly, operations run the risk of transitioning from emergency response to long-term "care and maintenance," often evident in the creation and maintenance of parallel systems for delivery of basic services. A joint-study with the World Food Programme found that livelihood options for refugees were very limited, with few having access to labour markets or land for agriculture, and the main source of income was sale of food rations and non-food items. Women's options were even more restricted and included collecting wood, begging, domestic service and resort to survival sex. Today UNHCR is reviewing its approach to supporting self-reliance. Quality self-reliance interventions enable people to live with greater dignity in displacement and strengthen their capacities for sustainable return when conditions allow; meanwhile, dependency on humanitarian aid decreases and pressures on host communities are eased.

77. This approach implies other shifts, each bringing new opportunities. First, it replaces the model of a "hand-over" from humanitarian to development actors. For self-reliance and resilience to be enabled, humanitarian, development and government partners must engage, jointly, from the start. UNHCR is seeking to develop and implement its strategies in ways that are consistent with and supportive of local development objectives. In addition to local and national development partners, UNHCR is partnering with the UN Development Programme, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the World Bank for programming in both host communities and areas of return. With both public and private partners, it is enhancing the quality of its strategies and interventions in education, livelihoods and entrepreneurship. With States, it is exploring how labour migrations schemes can be integrated into broader solutions strategies, for example through alternative legal stays and temporary permits. Such arrangements facilitate a regularization of status, enabling those in need of temporary protection or not yet able to access a durable solution to build their resources and self-reliance in the interim, and to contribute to the community in which they reside.

78. Through comprehensive solutions strategies and strategies to build self-reliance, UNHCR is seeking to remove long-standing obstacles to durable solutions. It is leveraging new relationships with development partners, as well as with the private sector. When immediate solutions are not in sight, UNHCR is committed to doing everything possible to

build human and social capital so that refugees can lead productive and dignified lives pending durable solutions. Yet in this endeavour, States remain fundamental to delivering solutions – not only through local integration and resettlement, but also through the political will necessary to allow every refugee, eventually, the choice to return home.

VI. Conclusion: looking ahead

79. Over the past decade, global forced displacement has grown more widespread, more protracted and more complex. The multiplication and unpredictability of conflict, coupled with the lack of political solutions for long-standing humanitarian crises, is a key driver in this development. Other global factors – population growth, urbanization, food insecurity, water and resource scarcity and, most importantly, the effects of climate change – are converging in such a way that the outlook is one of dramatically increasing humanitarian needs, even as humanitarian access frequently is curtailed by insecurity. With the economic uncertainty and budgetary constraints experienced by many governments, it is unclear whether the international community will have the resources needed to respond.

80. In a context in which mandates are often blurred, UNHCR's mandate stands out for its clarity. Ensuring the integrity of this unique legal mandate will remain of key importance. Yet with the future scenario of increased need and complicated linkages among the causes of displacement, UNHCR is ever-more cognizant of the centrality of partnership to its ability to deliver upon its mandate. The traditional pillars of global humanitarian endeavour – the UN system, non-governmental organizations, and the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – remain core partners in the Office's work on behalf of refugees, stateless persons and IDPs, even as they are joined by an expanding and diverse set of national and local partners. With partnership across the humanitarian system becoming stronger and more essential, UNHCR is committed to providing effective coordination of these efforts on behalf of refugees, enabling the greatest synergies based on the expertise and complementarities of each actor, while also ensuring an appropriate and efficient interface with other humanitarian coordination mechanisms. In this common endeavour of humanitarian action, as the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence come under pressure from different sides, UNHCR and its partners must also maintain a steadfast commitment to these principles, and redouble efforts to increase understanding of their vital importance.

81. UNHCR's close partnership with States remains paramount, as provided in the Statute of the Office. States play a unique role in the achievement of protection and solutions for refugees and stateless persons. They host refugees and offer them asylum. They provide political and funding support to achieve durable solutions, including the resolution of statelessness through legislative reform and grant of nationality. They accept refugees for resettlement and provide advocacy support. To continue fulfilling these functions and to meet the challenges of the future, it will be imperative for States and UNHCR to safeguard solidarity and cooperation as fundamental principles animating international protection. This requires a stable and appropriate sharing of burdens and responsibilities on matters that spill over national boundaries, becoming issues of international concern.

82. The Office is keenly committed to working with States to establish or strengthen asylum systems and support them where needed in the provision of protection and assistance to populations of concern. UNHCR can and must continue to play a convening role for solutions. And it remains ready to partner with interested States to find innovative ways to address the protection needs of those who are displaced across borders owing to forces other than persecution, serious human rights violations and on-going conflict.

83. Most immediately, given the scale of displacement today, an urgent challenge is maintaining space for protection and asylum by better supporting host States and communities in shouldering large-scale influxes. As the duration of displacement increases, a parallel imperative is catalysing political will and concerted action to unlock solutions for protracted displacement and statelessness in the decade ahead, and to address their root causes. Looking ahead, in light of the new dynamics driving people from their homes today, is the need for creativity and foresight from States to respond to the growing complexity of displacement and resolve the protection gaps of today's and tomorrow's forcibly displaced.

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